

Consideration for the Accused Student

- Whether responsible or not responsible, the allegation of this type of behavior may be overwhelming.
- Often, when asked if a person has committed a sexual assault they would say no, however asking if they participated in certain “behaviors” may get a different response.
- We are addressing a topic that the student may not have ever discussed in public before.
- The support system for the accused student will vary – friends, family may or may not be aware or if aware, may not be supportive.
- The emotions of the accused may range throughout the proceedings; they may find themselves trying to defend actions that even they do not understand.
- The typical level of sanction in these cases will warrant some level of suspension – the pressure on the student may be expressed in anger, frustration, fear, even humor.

Consideration for the Alleged Victim

- Consider the personal nature of the information they are sharing; Info not shared even with close friends, but now with strangers.
- Victim may be hesitant to acknowledge behaviors which are violations of policy for fear of recourse.
- Responses of Victim will vary – anger, fear, anxiety, guilt, self-blame, shame, may all be apparent.
- Victim may present as calm, composed, subdued, crying.
- Recall may come in waves. Victims may recall things in hearings that they did not recall initially.
- Victims may be non-trusting of the process and those who represent the process – this could be a direct outcome of what has occurred – someone they trusted betrayed them.
- Although the percentage of false reports is 2%, most victims assume they are not believed. Otherwise – why would there be a hearing?
- Victims need evidence of concern, safety, and security & validation of feelings; this can be difficult given the unbiased approach necessary for the Board.

Consideration for Designees, Board members, etc.

- We come to the table with biases and assumptions from our own experience with the issue.
- Most have not had experience in questioning others about their sexual experiences.
- We need to acknowledge the difficulty it may be for students involved to talk about their personal lives to strangers.
- During a disciplinary conference or a hearing we need to keep our own responses and reactions in check and know when it would be best to request a break.
- We may be challenged to distinguish between violations of policy and poor judgment.
- Board members must be comfortable knowing that their decision may lead to a student’s separation.
- We need time to process feelings associated to our personal reaction to what is being shared in the hearing.